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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION N
10/038,563	01/03/2002	Robert J. Ripich	1276-N	7118
45069	7590	10/19/2004	EXAMINER	
FRED ZOLLINGER III			BAXTER, JESSICA R	
P.O. BOX 2368			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
NORTH CANTON, OH 44720			3731	

DATE MAILED: 10/19/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/038,563

Applicant(s)

RIPICH ET AL.

Examiner

Jessica R Baxter

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3731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 August 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 17-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☒ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 03012004, 06032004.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election of the species of FIGS. 24 and 25 in the reply filed on August 19, 2004 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

### ***Oath/Declaration***

2. A new oath or declaration is required because the signed copy, dated May 9, 2002 is illegible.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 17-20, 23-26 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,916,228 to Ripich et al.

Ripich discloses a tongue cleaning device comprising a body having a handle (21) and a head; the head having a working edge (31) which is concave with respect to the tongue adapted to be moved over the tongue; the head of the body defining a debris retention recess (space between edges 31 and 41) adjacent the working edge adapted to collect debris as it is removed from the tongue by the working edge; wherein the debris retention recess is a curved depression

*Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ripich et al. '228 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,015,293 to Rimkus.

Ripich discloses the claimed invention except for the flexible handle. Rimkus teaches that a flexible handle portion is provided (16) in order to control the pressure exerted on the surface of the tongue by absorbing shock or acting as a leaf spring (Column 4 lines 44-50). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the device of Ripich with a flexible handle in order to control the pressure applied to the tongue while scraping its surface.

7. Claims 22, 27 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ripich et al. '228 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,624,259 to Heath et al.

Ripich discloses the claimed invention except for the body being fabricated from titanium. Ripich teaches that the device is may be made out of metal. Heath teaches that titanium is used in dental tools since it provides a high degree of flexibility and wear resistance and thus function properly for extended periods of time (Column 3 line 37-Column 4 line 5). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the device of Ripich out of a titanium in order to provide the device with superior wear resistance and higher flexibility.

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***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jessica R Baxter whose telephone number is 703-305-4069. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anh Tuan T Nguyen can be reached on 703-308-2154. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Jessica R Baxter  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3731

  
jrb

  
ANH TUAN T. NGUYEN  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

10/12/04